

# THE U.S.S.R. AND POLAND

The Sober Facts  
of the Situation

By  
W. P. COATES

Price 3d.

Published by the Author, Buckingham House,  
6/7 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2

October, 1939



# THE U.S.S.R. AND POLAND

The Sober Facts  
of the Situation

By  
W. P. COATES

Published by the Author, Buckingham House,  
6/7 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2

OCTOBER, 1939

"It is a notorious fact that the Polish peasantry are living in great poverty owing to the operation of the worst feudal system in Europe. That aristocracy has been practically in power for years. All the promises of concessions made from time to time to the peasants have been thwarted by its influence on recent Polish Governments. That is why the advancing Russian troops are being hailed by the peasants as deliverers.

"The German invasion is designed to annex to the Reich provinces where the decided majority of the population is Polish by race, language and tradition. On the other hand, the Russian armies marched into territories which are not Polish, and which were forcibly annexed by Poland after the Great War, in spite of the fierce protests and the armed resistance of the inhabitants. The inhabitants of Polish Ukraine are of the same race and language as their neighbours in the Ukrainian Republic of the Soviet Union.

"I felt it was a matter of primary importance to call attention at once to these salient considerations lest we commit ourselves rashly to war against Russia under the impression that her intervention was identical with that of Germany. The distinction between the two cases is increasingly acknowledged by British and French opinion. In these circumstances it would be an act of criminal folly to place the Russian advance in the same category as that of the Germans, although it would suit Herr Hitler's designs that we should do so. I am delighted that our Government have shown no indication of committing this country to such an attitude or enterprise."

(Extracts from a letter to the Polish Ambassador in London, by the Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George, M.P., September 28, 1939.)



# THE U.S.S.R. AND POLAND

## The Sober Facts of the Situation

EVENTS during the last twenty-five years have moved so rapidly that the pre-war Western frontiers of Russia have perhaps been forgotten by many. But to understand what has occurred recently along the Soviet-Polish frontier some idea of these frontiers, particularly in so far as they concern Poland, is essential.

The map at the beginning of this pamphlet shows how far west Tsarist Russia extended prior to the outbreak of war in 1914. Immediately upon the outbreak of war, the Russian armies concentrated their main forces against Austria and here they won a significant victory and occupied the province of Galicia with its valuable oil wells. Later the Russians also occupied Przemyśl and a number of Carpathian Passes threatening Hungary. But on the East Prussian front, after a few minor successes, the Russians suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the Germans at Tannenberg. The Germans followed up these successes by sending large reinforcements to the Austrian front and finally wrested from the Russians practically the whole of Galicia; the Germans also occupied the whole of Poland, the Russians withdrawing to a line some sixty miles east of Vilna and about 240 miles east of Warsaw. After this, in spite of one more or less important success by the Russians in June, 1916, when they recaptured Galicia, Russia, which had suffered terribly heavy losses in men, was completely exhausted and practically *hors de combat*. Then in 1917 followed the March and November Revolutions; into all this, of course, there is no need to enter here.

Unable to induce the Allies to make peace on the principle of no annexation and no indemnities, the Soviet Government was finally compelled to accept in March, 1918, Germany's brutal peace terms at Brest-Litovsk whereby the Ukraine, Poland, and all the Baltic States were separated from the rest of Russia. In all these countries Germany set up administrations completely subservient to herself, using them as sources of grain and other supplies. During the whole period of the German occupation the Ukrainian workers and peasants were mercilessly exploited by their new oppressors, aided by their old ones. To quote Princess Cantacuzene :—



"Our peasants . . . found it natural, traditionally logical and just to be beaten into semi-slavery after they had taken by force what did not belong to them. This had always been their fate so far in history. . . . So now, under German tutelage, they ploughed and sowed obediently, and harvested the grain-crops, driven into it by whip and insult. The grain went partly for the German dictators' benefit and partly for that of the old proprietors. This last share was paid into one or another of the banks of Kiev, and the ex-owners of the land were officially notified of their credit." (*The Russian Soviet Republic* by E. A. Ross, page 61.)

The results were that :—

"In June [1918] by tens of thousands the peasants began to rise, and pitched battles occurred between them and the oppressors in which the losses of the latter were by no means inconsiderable. Large reinforcements were despatched to the Germans. . . . German journalists who had been about in the Ukraine returned to Berlin warning that the Germans were more hated there than anywhere in the world." (*Ibid*, page 62.)

That was the state of affairs until the conclusion of the Armistice, November 11, 1918, when Germany was compelled to withdraw her troops from the Ukraine and all her other conquered territories.

### **Proposed Polish Frontiers**

In Poland, Germany had in 1917 set up a Polish State whose Polish Government was directly subordinate to the German generals commanding the army of occupation. With the conclusion of the Armistice the independence of Poland was formally declared and later it was proclaimed as an independent republic. As to the territory which this was to cover, one of President Wilson's famous "Fourteen Points" read :—

"An independent Polish State should be erected, which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant."

The Soviet Government on its part was more than willing to concede to Poland a frontier in accordance with Wilson's declaration. The Polish leaders, however, with Marshal Pilsudski at their head, had other views ; they were dreaming not of ethnological frontiers, but of the reconstruction of the old Polish Empire with its 1772 frontiers, embracing territories which in 1919 contained more non-Polish peoples than Poles.

The French Government, who hoped to use a powerful Poland as a bulwark against Germany, egged on the Polish imperialist zealots, and although the Polish people were at that time going through terrible suffering—starvation and disease—the economic needs of the country were neglected in order to satisfy the lust of conquest of the Polish landlords with Pilsudski at their head. To their shame, be it said, not only the French Government but the British Government and other Allied Governments, too (albeit not quite so enthusiastically as the French), helped the Polish generals in their campaigns by means of arms, supplies of all kinds, advice, organisation, and leadership.

On the other hand the Russian “Whites,” who were then fighting the Soviets and who dreamt of re-establishing the old Tsarist Russian Empire, were opposed to the Polish pretensions. As a result there was heavy fighting, in particular between the Poles and the “Ukrainian Government,” under the Hetman, Petlura, over the purely Ukrainian province of East Galicia. In this struggle the Poles were finally victorious. Later Ukrainian “Whites” practically capitulated to the Poles and made common cause with them against Soviet Russia.

At the Paris Peace Conference in December, 1919, a provisional line was laid down as the eastern boundary of the reconstructed Polish Republic. This line, roughly forming the eastern boundary of the territory peopled by Poles, was subsequently known as the “Curzon Line” and was approximately as follows: Grodno, Vapovka, Nomirov, Brest-Litovsk, Doromuch, Ustilug, east of Grubeshov Krilov, and then west of Rawa-Ruska, east of Przemyśl to the Carpathians. North of Grodno the line which was to be held by the Lithuanians would run along the railway running from Grodno to Vilna and thence to Dvinsk. The map illustrates this plan. This frontier was subsequently again proposed as the dividing line between Poland and Soviet Russia in a Note of the British Government dated July 12, 1920, when the Red Army was advancing on Warsaw.

### Polish Intransigence

The Soviet Government was willing to accept this frontier, indeed, to give the Poles even more favourable terms, but the Polish Government, bent as it was on imperialist conquest, would not hear of it. When in the middle of 1920, the Poles aided, as we have already pointed out, by the Allies, won a series of victories against the Red armies, they proposed such terms to the Soviet Government that even *The Times* in the course of a leader exclaimed:—

“We trust, however, that the Poles will not be led astray by their brilliant military success. The great tasks before them lie within their own borders. They should

not burden themselves with external responsibilities beyond their strength. Some of their original demands, as presented to the Soviet Government, were fantastic, particularly the colossal claims for compensation for ancient wrongs." (*The Times*, May 1, 1920.)

And the *Daily News* leader of the same date declared :—

"As a climax the Warsaw Government registered a preposterous claim for the severance from Russia of all the territory that lay within the frontiers of the pre-1772 Poland.

"There is no need to say more of that sequence of events than that they constitute the self-proclaimed policy of a Government resolute against peace."

In August, 1920, when the Soviets were meeting with success in the field, the Soviet Government proposed that: "The final frontier of the independent State of Poland shall, in the main, be identical with the line indicated in the Note of Lord Curzon of Kedleston on July 20, but additional territory shall be given to Poland on the east in the regions of Bialystok and Kholm." But the Poles, backed by the French Government and well equipped by the Allies generally, would have none of it. The French General Weygand took command of the Polish forces, and for a variety of reasons which we cannot discuss here, inflicted a defeat on the Red army. Whilst the fight was still in progress the Polish and Soviet representatives opened a peace conference in Riga, September 13, 1920.

The Poles were strongly advised by their friends in this and other countries to cease talking of the 1772 frontiers and, fearful lest the fortunes of war might turn against them, they took this advice to some extent to heart but, nevertheless, exacted a frontier—shown in the map—which embraced provinces whose populations were overwhelmingly non-Polish.

A preliminary peace was signed on October 18, 1920, and the final Peace Treaty, known as the Treaty of Riga, was signed March 18, 1921. Under its terms Poland received territory measuring 52,000 square miles, with a population of 4,000,000 inhabitants, more than had been allotted them by the Versailles Treaty.

The only ones who benefited from the inclusion of these non-Polish regions in the Polish Republic were the Polish landlords (the Pans) who mercilessly exploited the Belorussians and Ukrainians put under their overlordship.

### **German Invasion of Poland**

Such was the position and such was the frontier when the German troops invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.



The question arises, what chance had Poland without the help of the Soviet forces to repel the German invasion? The reply is that most military experts considered that, without Soviet aid, Poland would be helpless against Germany.

Mr. Lloyd George, referring to the guarantee given by the British Prime Minister to Poland, Rumania, and Greece against German aggression, declared :—

“ It looked magnificent, but men who had some knowledge of the problems pointed out to him [the Prime Minister] that it was not war. I was the first to call attention to that obvious fact in the House of Commons. I denounced it as sheer madness to give such a pledge in the absence of military support from Russia.

“ Russian troops could alone hope to reach the battlefield in time to save the Polish army from being crushed by an overwhelming German superiority in men, and especially in equipment.

“ The Chief of our General Staff was abroad in France when this hare-brained pledge was given. I have good reason to believe that on his return he and his advisers pointed out that we did not possess the means to redeem it.” (*Sunday Express*, July 23, 1939.)

Again, to give but one more example, Commander Stephen King-Hall, the well-known commentator on foreign affairs, in the *K.-H. News Letter*, September 22, 1939, pointed out the extremely serious situation which would confront the Poles in a war with Germany. Referring to a visit he paid to Poland in May, 1939, Commander King-Hall said :—

“ Whilst in Warsaw I had a long talk about the strategy of a Polish-German war with Colonel Beck's *chef de cabinet*. He told me that he had heard that I had shocked about twenty Polish journalists by telling them—in answer to their inquiries—that it was out of the question to suppose that British battleships would appear in the Baltic. I explained to him that I was equally shocked by the astonishing optimism displayed by my Polish friends. So we got to the point when he was good enough to ask me to make an appreciation of the military situation. In summary I said: ‘ Leaving aside, for the moment, political considerations, the proper course for Poland is to regard the whole of her territory as a vast forward zone, in which the German lightning stroke will exhaust itself during the autumn. You will have to sacrifice 25 per cent. of your forces and all your material in trying to hold up and impede the German advance. If you are lucky you might be able to stand for the winter on the

Vistula and Bug, but personally I doubt it. If I am right, 75 per cent. of your forces will have to be concentrated in two bodies north and south of the great Pripet marshes on the Polish-Russian frontier. In the spring of 1940 these forces, supplied from Russia, and with their centre protected by the impenetrable marshes, will have to march westward and drive out the Germans, who by that time will be under pressure in the west.'

"My friend saw the point of all this, but of course we both agreed that, assuming my military analysis was sound, *its application in practice was entirely dependent upon the creation of a water-tight Soviet-Polish alliance.* Was that possible? My friend thought not." [Our italics.]

Having rejected the offer of Soviet aid the German-Polish war took exactly the course which the military experts had predicted except that the débâcle was even more speedy than had been anticipated. Within ten days of the commencement of hostilities the Poles, who had lost to the Germans a large proportion of her most valuable economic areas, were in a well-nigh hopeless position.

### The Polish Débâcle

This was the way the situation was summed up by *The Times* correspondent at Zaleszczyki (on the Polish-Rumanian frontier) :—

"The Polish military situation, which a week ago was described in this correspondence as an orderly retreat with the army intact, has now become the exact opposite. The Polish front has collapsed completely, and it is plain that little more remains for the Germans to do except mop up what is left of a gallant army of more than 1,500,000 men. . . .

"One instance of the appalling chaos is the fact that the British and French military missions were not allowed to approach the front except apparently for the defence of Lvov. Much of the time during these past ten days, separate units of the Polish army had not the vaguest idea of where General Headquarters were situated. They had also no more than a vague idea of where the fronts were except when they heard the German wireless *communiqués.*" (*The Times*, September 18, 1939.)

Many military correspondents have given similar pictures of the rout of the Poles.

Is it not clear that we and Poland have paid dearly for the loss of Soviet aid in our fight against Germany. As Mr. Lloyd George so justly wrote :—



"We must not conceal from ourselves the enormous difference it would have made to our chances if at this hour the great air fleet of Germany, which is so appreciably facilitating the advance of her armies in Poland, were confronted by the equally powerful fleet of Russia—and if two powerful Russian armies were advancing, one upon East Prussia and the other towards Cracow.

"This was the plan placed before our military missions by Voroshilov, the Soviet War Minister. The tragic story of the rejection of this plan has yet to be told, and responsibility for the stupidities that lost us Russia's powerful support justly affixed and sternly dealt with." (*Sunday Express*, September 10, 1939.)

### The National Minorities in Poland

Now a few words in regard to the national minorities included in the Polish Republic. It is important to note that about 40 per cent. of the population of this Republic constituted national minorities, for the most part, Belorussians (White Russians), Ukrainians, and Jews. The Soviet press estimated that there were at least 8,000,000 Ukrainians and 3,000,000 Belorussians in Poland. These minorities inhabit mainly the sections of Belorussia and the Ukraine which were severed from Soviet Russia as explained above.

It might have been expected that with the memory of their own oppression under the Russian Tsardom, the Polish Government would have followed a more liberal, a more tolerant attitude towards the minorities in their own Republic. Actually, however, the Polish authorities proved to be wonderfully apt pupils and imitators of the Tsarist oppressors. Not only did the Poles refuse any kind of local autonomy to the districts inhabited by the Belorussians and Ukrainians but every effort was made to Polishise them. They were not permitted to use their own language in the schools, they were not allowed to develop their own national literature and cultures in any way. Although the Polish inhabitants of these areas constitute a small minority of the population the local administration was entirely in the hands of the Poles and only the Polish language was recognised in all State transactions, the law courts, etc. As for the treatment of the Jews, although not quite so brutal as in Nazi Germany, it was not very much better than it had been in Tsarist Russia.

The Soviet press many times during the past years (since the establishment of the Polish Republic) referred to the sufferings and oppression of the Belorussians, Ukrainians, and Jews in Poland, and in a recent article in *Pravda* (September 14, 1939) it is this treatment of the minorities which is held to be responsible for the overwhelmingly rapid collapse of the Polish forces in their

encounter with Germany, for said *Pravda*, as a result of this treatment of the big national minorities "it was impossible to create in Poland that internal unity and consolidation of the forces of a multi-national State which alone could give rise to a mighty wave of patriotism, and which would have inspired the Polish army (within which there were not only Poles but also Belorussians and Ukrainians) to make a united powerful effort to repulse the enemy. The national minorities of Poland did not and could not become a reliable support of the State régime. A multi-national State which is not consolidated by ties of friendship and equality between the nations inhabiting it but which, on the contrary, is based on the oppression and inequality of the national minorities cannot form a strong military force."

### **Soviet Forces Cross the Polish Frontier**

Early in the morning of September 17, 1939, the Soviet Government handed the following Note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow :—

"Mr. Ambassador, the Polish-German war had revealed the internal insolvency of the Polish State. In ten days of hostilities Poland has lost all her industrial regions and cultural centres. Warsaw, as the capital of Poland, no longer exists. The Polish Government has fallen to pieces and shows no sign of life. This means that the Polish State and its Government have virtually ceased to exist ; the treaties concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Poland have thereby ceased to operate.

"Abandoned to her fate and left without leadership Poland has become a fertile field for any accidental and unexpected contingency which may create a menace to the U.S.S.R. Hence while it was hitherto neutral, the Soviet Government can no longer maintain a neutral attitude towards these facts ; nor can the Soviet Government remain indifferent when its blood brothers—Ukrainians and Belorussians (White Russians)—inhabiting Polish territory, having been abandoned to their fate, are left without protection.

"In view of this state of affairs the Soviet Government has instructed the Higher Command of the Red Army to order troops to cross the frontier and take under their protection the lives and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. At the same time the Soviet Government intends to take every measure to deliver the Polish people from the disastrous war into which they have been plunged by their unwise leaders and to give them an opportunity to live a life of peace."



The Polish Ambassador refused to accept the Note, but nevertheless agreed to inform his Government of its contents.

The following Note was transmitted to the diplomatic representatives, in Moscow, of Germany, Italy, Iran, China, Japan, Great Britain, France, Afghanistan, America, Turkey, Finland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Mongolian People's Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Rumania, Tuva People's Republic, Lithuania, Norway, and Hungary :—

“ Mr. Ambassador, in transmitting to you the enclosed copy of Note of the Soviet Government of September 17, 1939, to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, I have the honour, on instructions of my Government, to inform you that the U.S.S.R. will pursue a policy of neutrality in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and your country.”

The same morning Soviet troops crossed the frontier and marched into Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. According to most reports from the spot, the Soviet troops met with practically no resistance and were welcomed by the Ukrainian and Belorussian population.

By midday, September 18, the Red army had actually reached some 90 miles west of the Soviet-Polish frontier.

### **Molotov's Broadcast to Soviet People**

The reasons which led the Soviet Government to send its army into Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia was explained by M. Molotov in the following message to the Soviet people, broadcast at 11.30 a.m., September 17, 1939 :—

“ Comrades, men and women citizens of our great country ! Events arising out of the Polish-German war have revealed the internal insolvency and obvious impotence of the Polish State. Polish ruling circles have suffered bankruptcy. All this has taken place in the briefest space of time.

“ A mere fortnight has passed and Poland has already lost all her industrial centres and major part of her large cities and cultural centres. Warsaw, as the capital of the Polish State, no longer exists. No one knows the whereabouts of the Polish Government. The population of Poland have been abandoned by their ill-starred leaders to their fate. The Polish State and its Government have virtually ceased to exist.

### **Concern for Soviet Security**

“ In view of this state of affairs, the treaties concluded between the Soviet Union and Poland have ceased to exist. A situation has arisen in Poland which demands of

the Soviet Government special concern for the security of its State. Poland has become a fertile field for any accidental and unexpected contingency which may create a menace to the Soviet Union.

"Until the last moment the Soviet Government remained neutral. But in view of the circumstances mentioned it can no longer maintain a neutral attitude towards the situation that has arisen.

"Nor can it be demanded of the Soviet Government that it should remain indifferent to the fate of its blood brothers—Ukrainians and Belorussians—inhabiting Poland who even formerly were nations without any rights and who have now been entirely abandoned to their fate. The Soviet Government deems it its sacred duty to extend the hand of assistance to its brother Ukrainians and brother Belorussians inhabiting Poland.

"In view of all this, the Government of the Soviet Union has this morning handed a Note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow announcing that the Soviet Government has instructed the Higher Command of the Red Army to order troops to cross the frontier and take under their protection the lives and property of the populations of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. The Soviet Government also stated in this Note that at the same time it intends to take every measure to deliver the Polish people from the disastrous war into which they have been plunged by their unwise leaders and give them an opportunity to live a life of peace.

### Swift Collapse

"In the early part of September, when the partial call up of the Red army reserves was undertaken in the Ukraine, Belorussia, and in four other military areas, the situation in Poland was not clear and this call up was undertaken as a precautionary measure. Nobody could have expected that the Polish State would have betrayed such impotence and such a swift collapse as has now already taken place all over Poland.

"But inasmuch as this collapse is a fact and the Polish statesmen have revealed their utter bankruptcy and are incapable of changing the situation in Poland, our Red army having received large reinforcements as a result of the recent call up of reserves, must perform with credit the honourable duty laid upon it.

"The Government expresses its firm conviction that our Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will this time, too, display its combative might with conscientiousness and



discipline and that in performing its great emancipatory task it will distinguish itself by new feats of heroism and glory.

"Simultaneously the Soviet Government handed copies of its Note to the Polish Ambassador to all the Governments with which the U.S.S.R. has diplomatic relations, declaring that the Soviet Union will pursue a policy of neutrality towards all these countries. This determines our recent steps in foreign policy.

#### **No Ration Cards in the U.S.S.R.**

"The Soviet Government," continued M. Molotov, "also addresses citizens of the Soviet Union with the following explanation. In connection with the call up of reservists some of our citizens have shown a tendency to accumulate hoards of food and other commodities for fear that a ration system of supply may be introduced. The Government deems it necessary to state that it has no intention of introducing a ration system for food and manufactured goods even if the measures of State necessitated by foreign events should be prolonged for some time.

"I am afraid that from these excessive purchases of food and goods only those will suffer who go in for this and hoard unnecessary supplies thus subjecting the latter to the risk of spoiling. Our country is provided with all it requires and can get along without any ration system. Our task, the task of every worker and peasant, of every employee and intellectual is now to work honestly and self-sacrificingly at his post and thereby assist the Red army.

"As to the men of our valiant Red army, I have no doubt that they will perform their duty to their country with credit and glory.

"Peoples of the Soviet Union, citizens of our country, men of our Red army and navy are all united as never before around the Soviet Government, around our Bolshevik Party, around their great Leader, around wise Comrade Stalin, for the achievement of new unparalleled successes in labour, in industries and collective farms, and of new and glorious victories of the army at the fronts."

#### **Poland at Mercy of Nazis**

The question was at once asked, why had the U.S.S.R. marched into Poland? There is no need to seek deeper than the reasons given and the obvious facts of the situation. The virtual flight of the Polish Government from Poland and the collapse of the Polish defence had placed the whole of Poland at the mercy of

the German Nazis. The U.S.S.R. simply could not stand by and see Germany overrun the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia (White Russia)—unjustly and forcibly filched from Soviet Russia by the Poles, aided by Britain and France, in 1920.

That the Soviet occupation of these provinces was not the result of any previous collaboration between the German and Soviet Governments is borne out by, amongst other facts, the following report of the *News Chronicle* New York correspondent :—

“Gedye, of the *New York Times*, experienced correspondent in Moscow, reports that authoritative British circles there are convinced that the Russian move into Poland was not arranged when Ribbentrop signed the pact, as Berlin is now implying.

“It is believed that Ribbentrop promised that the Nazis would not go beyond the line running through Brest-Litovsk and Lwow, but that Stalin’s mistrust of his new friends caused him to act as soon as he saw the German army nearing the line.

“He is believed not to have notified the Germans of his intention to occupy White Russian and Ukrainian areas until after his secret mobilisation of reserves was completed.

“Germans then had to put on the best possible face and pretend the move was made with their approval.

“This story is borne out by earlier messages from Berlin which contrived, despite the censorship, to show that the Germans were baffled by the fragmentary news they got of the Russian mobilisation.” (*News Chronicle*, September 20, 1939.)

It will be recalled that Gedye is the talented author of that recent excellent book *Fallen Bastions*.

*The Times* (September 20, 1939) Rotterdam correspondent also declared : “Reports from Berlin make it clear that no agreement had previously been reached between Germany and Russia about the partition of Poland.”

Although the march of the Soviet troops into Poland was at first vehemently and bitterly attacked in the British press, nevertheless many of the correspondents were quick to recognise the realities of the situation which had given rise to the Soviet action.

Here are a few extracts from the press of the following morning, *September 18, 1939* :—

*The Times* correspondent at Zaleszczyki (on the Polish-Rumanian frontier) stated :—

“The Polish military situation, which a week ago was described in this correspondence as an orderly retreat



with the army intact, has now become the exact opposite. The Polish front has collapsed completely, and it is plain that little more remains for the Germans to do except mop up what is left of a gallant army of more than 1,500,000 men. Although the Germans have not yet appeared in this town and have not yet entered Sniatyn or Kutý—both frontier towns—it is plain from to-day's news from Central and Northern Poland that the cutting of this frontier is only a matter of time. . . .

“One instance of the appalling chaos is the fact that the British and French military missions were not allowed to approach the front except apparently for the defence of Lvov. *Much of the time during these past ten days*, separate units of the Polish army had not the vaguest idea of where General Headquarters were situated. They had also no more than a vague idea of where the fronts were except when they heard the German wireless *communiqués*.” [Our italics.]

The correspondents of other papers have borne out this testimony of the collapse of Polish resistance.

*Daily Telegraph* diplomatic correspondent stated:—

“It has been noted that Russia, while she has sent forces into Poland, so far as can be ascertained along the whole length of the common frontier, has expressly explained that she is not making war on Poland.

“It is understood that the Polish Government for its part does not propose to declare the existence of a state of war with Russia. . . .

“Alternatively, it may be found that Moscow is not prepared to place unlimited trust in Berlin. For if German troops occupied the Polish Ukraine they might not move out again later and, indeed, might not halt at the Russian-Ukrainian frontier.”

*Daily Telegraph* in the course of a leader said:—

“Reading between the lines, it is plain enough that the Russian Government is alarmed at the rapidity of the German advance and the threat it offers to Russia's western frontier. The new Russo-German Non-aggression Pact is worth no more and no less than Herr Hitler's agreements with Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, and Poland, and Stalin cannot watch the German steam-roller crashing over prostrate Poland without an uneasy suspicion that the driver may forget to stop. Stalin has presumably read *Mein Kampf*. If so, he has no doubt noted Herr Hitler's conviction that Germany's true field of expansion is to the eastward; that what he covets most in Europe is the

granary of the Ukraine. Like most monomaniacs, Herr Hitler has been true to himself if nothing else ; and there is point in M. Molotov's insistence that Poland's White Russians and Ukrainians are under Red protection. . . .

"Whatever the future may hold, two things are certain. The presence of a powerful Russian army on his eastern frontier will immobilise a large part of Herr Hitler's forces at a time when they are needed in the west ; and Poland, brutally stricken to the earth, will rise again."

*News Chronicle* in the course of a leader declared :—

"Soviet intervention in Poland has no doubt been hastened by the speed of the German advance. It may be that Moscow had begun to fear lest the impetus of Hitler's drive might carry him further than was convenient to Stalin and find him establishing himself on or dangerously near the existing Russian frontier. Immediate Russian action to occupy a slice of East Poland and, more especially, to safeguard the Polish Ukraine from German penetration before it became too late would be an obvious reaction to such a fear."

*Daily Express* Moscow correspondent said :—

"In justification of the invasion, most Russians argue that the Ukrainians and White Russians are being spared 'the bitter lot of falling under the iron heel of Fascism.' They say, too : 'Hitler is prevented from coming too close to Soviet territory.'"

*Daily Express* political correspondent declared :—

"The Russians' invasion of Poland caused no surprise in London diplomatic quarters yesterday. Some such step had been anticipated for some time.

"It should not be assumed that the new move is necessarily to the disadvantage of the Allied cause.

"If, as is expected, the Russians advance until they have a common frontier with the Germans in Polish territory, it will be necessary for Hitler to maintain considerable forces there as a 'precautionary measure.'

"He will thus be forced to have an army in the East big enough to keep down the Poles and to ensure that Russia does not advance further."

*Daily Mail*. Mr. G. Ward Price said :—

"Russia resented the incorporation of 3,000,000 Ukrainians in Poland. Her entry of Polish territory can be considered as intended to ensure that these former Russians do not now fall under German sway.



"There is no need to assume that the co-operation of the Soviet Government with Germany will go farther than the protection of their own interests under the Russo-German Pact."

### Bernard Shaw's Letter

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw realised clearly the real significance of what had taken and was taking place. In a characteristic but eminently pertinent letter to *The Times* he stated :—

"We have encouraged Poland to fight by our pledge to support her; and we have encouraged ourselves by silly reports that the Polish army was unbroken and that the Poles were performing prodigies of valour. The truth, as we now have to admit, and as Mr. Molotov notes, is that our support has so entirely failed that the Polish resistance has been wiped out, and with it the Polish army and the Polish Government, leaving Poland derelict to be picked up and put on by Herr Hitler as a shepherd putteth on his garment.

"At this point, we being helpless, Mr. Stalin steps in and says 'Not quite. If the Ukraine and White Russia are going begging, Russia will occupy them, Hitler or no Hitler.' No sooner said than done. The Red army is in occupation. Mr. Stalin, who was very explicit as to his objection to be made a cat's paw to take our chestnuts off the fire, has no objection whatever to using Herr Hitler as a cat's paw. The unfortunate Führer is compelled to disgorge half his booty and to face yet another army saying: 'Thus far and no farther.'

"And instead of giving three cheers for Stalin we are shrieking that all is lost." (*The Times*, September 20, 1939.)

In passing we would point out that the responsibility for driving the U.S.S.R. from the proposed peace front of the non-aggression Powers rests with the British, French, and Polish Governments themselves; as the *News Chronicle* (September 19, 1939) well put it :—

"The tragedy of the thing is that it emphatically need never have occurred. The British Government's treatment of Russia and its attitude towards Russian susceptibilities has been a pattern of mismanagement from the start.

"Months ago Russia proposed to Britain an agreement to stop aggression: the record of our Government's reactions to that proposal, and of its subsequent dilatory, half-hearted and slightly scornful approaches has now

become part of history, but it was largely responsible for turning Moscow towards the course to which it is now, with incalculable consequences, committed."

### Proposed Demarcation Line

On September 19 *The Times* Rotterdam correspondent, discussing the projected demarcation line and the questions at issue between Germany and the U.S.S.R. in regard to Poland wrote :—

"The Germans evidently intended to maintain control of Lemberg (Lvov) with the oilfield to the south of it. Only a few days ago, their semi-official agencies were reckoning up how much oil they would obtain from there. It now appears that Russia claims the whole of Eastern Galicia. There will no doubt be some hard bargaining here ; but neutral opinion in Berlin inclines to the belief that Germany, with Great Britain and France still to face in the west, will not be able to resist Russian demands.

"In this case the new Russian frontier might extend from East Prussia to Hungary. The latter, it is stated, will have a considerable length of common frontier with Russia, a fact which would add to Hungary's preoccupations and might exercise a favourable influence on her relations with Rumania.

"Another important result of the regulations of the frontier on these lines would be that Germany, instead of being more or less in direct contact with Rumania through a puppet Polish State, would be separated from Rumania by a large section of territory under the control of Russia. *This might well render Rumania less susceptible to German influence.*" (*The Times*, September 20, 1939.) [Our italics.]

Meanwhile the collapse of the Polish fighting forces and the speed and equipment of the Red army were producing profound impressions in the Balkan capitals and in Berlin. *The Times* correspondent cabled from Bucharest, September 21, 1939 :—

"As the last remnants of the Polish army are filtering down towards central Rumania and Hungary, the Balkan and Danubian countries are busily estimating the significance to them of the Polish *débâcle*. Let it be said immediately that the crushing defeat of Poland has made the most profound impression in every Balkan and Danubian land, including even Turkey. But the most important impression has been created by the dramatic intervention of Russia—an impression which may partly be held to counter the effects of the Polish defeat as seen from the German point of view." (*The Times*, September 22, 1939.)



On the following day, the Helsinki correspondent of the same journal cabled :—

“ Finnish correspondents report that Berlin is surprised by the achievements of the Red army. It is added that Berlin has ceased talking of a settlement on the Brest-Litovsk model, and the opinion is heard that Germany will be required to accept a line farther west than that originally contemplated.” (*The Times*, September 23, 1939.)

And the same issue of *The Times* contained a long article by a special correspondent, entitled “Germany in the East,” in the course of which he wrote :—

“ But once Poland was defeated and overrun by the Germans, Russia could not let the White Russian and Ukrainian provinces fall into the hands of the Nazis, who would have formed them into separatist puppet States, a menace to Russia.

“ Russia knows well that were Hitler to defeat the Western Powers, or merely attain an inconclusive peace with them, his programme for German puppet States in White Russia and the Ukraine would quickly revive, and Russia would be his next victim. Hitler, on the other hand, is quite aware that if he is defeated by the Western Powers Stalin will neither mourn nor succour him.” (*The Times*, September 23, 1939.)

Meanwhile negotiations were taking place in Moscow between the representatives of the Soviet and German Governments.

The bargaining no doubt was hard, but the results were quick. A joint Soviet-German *communiqué* was issued on the night of September 22, 1939, stating :—

“ The Governments of Germany and the U.S.S.R. have established a demarcation line between the German and Soviet armies which passes along the River Pissa up to its confluence with the River Narew, then along the Narew up to its confluence with the River Bug, then along the Bug up to its confluence with the River Vistula, then along the Vistula up to the mouth of the River San, and then along the San up to its source.”

### **Soviets in Strong Strategical Position**

When the news of this demarcation line reached foreign capitals it created a profound impression. Competent observers immediately realised that the territorial, economic, and strategical gains which the Soviet Union had acquired radically changed the situation in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in favour of the U.S.S.R. and against the Reich. Further, it strengthened the conviction that the U.S.S.R. had been pursuing throughout not a

pro-German but a clearly pro-Soviet policy. The *Daily Telegraph's* diplomatic correspondent wrote: "In any event it seems clear that Russia, whether by agreement with Germany or by anticipating the German military operations, has succeeded in greatly strengthening her own power to resist any attempt by Hitler to realise his dream of colonising the Ukraine." (*Daily Telegraph*, September 23, 1939.)

Editorially, the *News Chronicle* declared:—

"On many previous occasions Hitler has prided himself on acquiring new territory without fighting for it. In Poland he has fought for new territory without acquiring it. Moscow has been more than a match for him.

"The Red army is now not merely in a position to bar the way to a new Nazi thrust in the South-East. It is in contact with the already disaffected Slovaks and not so very far away from its fellow Slavs of the Czech protectorate. Who can tell what propaganda (and what arms) might eventually pass over the Slovak border?" (*News Chronicle*, September 23, 1939.)

The *Daily Express* pertinently stated:—

"The deal shows that the Germans are withdrawing from ground they won in the south-east. They had occupied the oilfields at Drohobycz and Stryj.

"Extreme Nazis in Berlin say the deal is a bitter blow to Germany. Stalin has asked for more and has got it because Hitler is no longer in a position to refuse the demands of his new friends.

"Loss of Poland's oilfields to the Soviet will shatter the plans of Air Chief Hermann Goering and his economic staff, who counted on this oil." (*Daily Express*, September 23, 1939.)

The military correspondent of the *Yorkshire Post* commented:—

"When the Germans made their big flank movement to south-east Poland the immediate objective was to gain the line of communication into Rumania to ensure regular supplies of oil and agricultural produce for the use of the German forces. In order to make this possible without delay, the railway from Lemberg across the frontier, the stations, depots, and rolling stock were left unbombed; and the irony of it is that the Russians have taken them over as a going concern by anticipating the German entry to this area." (*Yorkshire Post*, September 23, 1939.)

That was not all, the correspondent continued:—

"The German military mission recently sent to Moscow has had as its objective a rectification of this position by



the withdrawal of the Russians from this line of supply and its operative occupation handed over to the Germans. In order to obtain this advantage the mission offered Russia the old frontier line of 1914, whereby Warsaw would be inside the Russian frontier. This old line runs from East Prussia to Moravia; and in return for granting so much land the Germans wanted the line to turn due east at Czestochowa in the south and give them a broad corridor across the Slovakian, Hungarian, and Rumanian frontiers—in other words the recovery of the gateway to the Black Sea, now in Russian hands. Russia declined this proposal and insisted on the straight line north to south—frontier to frontier—and prevailed. Thus they go farther west than originally arranged.” (*Ibid.*)

As was to be expected, Mr. J. L. Garvin realised the enormous potentialities of the new strategic situation created. After admonishing the country that “we must not play the Hitlerite game by making Russia an antagonist instead of a neutral. It is the last thing that the Poles themselves desire or that any wise friend to their future could contemplate,” he continued:—

“Between the Baltic States and the middle Carpathians, the Russians hold all the strategic and political points famous in old and later wars as commanding rivers, roads, railways, and disputed racial areas. Such key-places, ranging from north to south, are Vilna, Grodno, Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk, Kovel, and Lvov, better known as Lemberg.” (*Observer*, September 24, 1939.)

That was not all, the writer went on:—

“Some questions had not been quite squared with the Nazis. One of them concerned that advanced corner of Eastern Galicia which lies just west and south of Lemberg. It is a notable corner and more will be heard of it some day. On the one hand, it contains the valuable Carpathian oil-field; the fortress of Przemyśl; and good passes across the mountains into ‘sub-Carpathian Ruthenia,’ recently recovered by Hungary but now a cause of acute anxiety at Budapest. For all reasons—industrial, strategical, and political—this area has been coveted dearly by the Germans. On the other hand, it undoubtedly goes by race with the rest of Ukrainian Galicia. For, as all lifelong students of the subject are aware, that race reaches westward to Przemyśl on the San and to the upper course of that river where it winds down from the high Carpathian valleys.”

“Finally,” declared Mr. Garvin, “Moscow held the trumps and won the game. Germany had to yield every inch of the coveted corner with all the assets we have named. As to gaining

fullest advantage from a unique opportunity it is now or never with Russia. The Kremlin knows it and sees to it."

### Superior Force only Argument against Hitler

Commander Stephen King-Hall, in the *Sunday Pictorial*, September 24, 1939, averred :—

"The Russians, according to all reports, are employing very large forces. Why ?

"They certainly do not require them against the Poles. What then ?

"The common-sense answer is that even if there are secret clauses in the Russo-German Pact laying down the boundary line between the Russian and German spheres of influence Stalin has no more faith in Hitler's word than anyone else. The Russians believe—and with reason—that superior force is the only argument understood by Hitler.

"Therefore Stalin has sent a force into Poland which can effectively keep the Germans out of the Ukraine.

"And, even more important, the Russian advance in the south has cut Germany off from Rumania, and effectively barred the Nazis from getting down to the Black Sea.

"To suggest that Stalin's policy is to make Hitler stronger than he already is does not make sense."

Reflection over the week-end certainly did not weaken the conclusions expressed on Saturday and Sunday. For example, on Monday, the *Daily Mail* editorially stated :—

"Be sure of one thing. Stalin is not acting for love of Hitler, nor to save the democracies. He has moved into Poland solely in the interests of Russia.

"He is pursuing a realistic policy—as he always has done. Remember that last June, while the Anglo-Soviet talks were going on, Molotov said it was Stalin's precept not to pull other people's chestnuts out of the fire." (*Daily Mail*, September 25, 1939.)

The *Yorkshire Post* in its leader, September 25, 1939, declared:—

"As it is, Russia has emerged from her isolation to take rank as one of the great Powers of Europe. Her new frontier, stopping at Warsaw, leaves to Germany a fairly large area of Poland which was Russian prior to 1914. On the other hand, Russia now acquires territories which then belonged to Austria-Hungary; and these are just the territories which will enable her—if she wishes—to impose an effective and unexpected check on Germany's long-cherished hopes of further expansion south-eastward



towards the Black Sea, of which the suspension of the Ukrainian movement in Germany is only a preliminary token."

And in the same issue the journal's military correspondent commented :—

"A glance at the map will show that Stalin has driven a wedge into Eastern Europe which is 200 miles long on a depth of 250 miles and has created a new salient into German territory which re-created the one made by the bulge of Poland towards Berlin. Hitler has poured blood and treasure to abolish the Polish salient and now finds himself with another, and a Red army driven deep between East Prussia and Slovakia, thus disposing of the German plan of joining those two lands with a greater German frontier running down through Brest-Litovsk."

The *News Chronicle* special correspondent at Copenhagen cabled :—

"In this preliminary sparring the advantage seems to be overwhelmingly with Russia, as, with the automatic precision of a draughts player taking three of his opponent's draughts in one move, Molotov has snapped-up Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Turkey, and is negotiating with Hungary.

"The prospect of Russian treaties with these Powers has caused the utmost dismay in Berlin for the whole war is being fought so that Germany can rule Eastern and Central Europe, and the first advantages are all accruing to Russia as the Balkan Powers turn to the Soviet, the only State which they feel can protect them against the Reich."

"That Russia acts for Russia alone is recognised in Berlin, but her deeds may completely upset all Hitler's war calculations and provide a startling, not to say fantastic, next chapter in the diplomatic history of a second world war." (*News Chronicle*, September 25, 1939.)

The military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, September 25, 1939, wrote : "But for the intervention of the Western Powers on the one hand and Soviet Russia on the other Rumania might have been his [Hitler's] next objective."

### Reactions Abroad

So far we have been dealing only with the reactions in Great Britain. They were equally profound abroad.

The semi-official *Le Temps* in a leader, September 22, 1939, declared :—

"It is a fact that the Russian troops who have advanced up to the whole extent of the Polish-Rumanian frontier and have also reached the Polish-Hungarian frontier, are

now in a position to cut off Germany from the road towards Rumania, towards the oilfields district, towards all the riches that Nationalist Socialist Germany coveted in the south-east of the Continent. That is a fact of capital importance."

"Pertinax" in *L'Ordre*, September 23, 1939, stated: "The defeat being prepared for Germany will be worse than in 1918. Germany risks collapse at the feet of powerful Russia."

In Yugoslavia, a country which up to the present has had no diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R., the Soviet advance was warmly welcomed: "Among all sections of the public here," cabled *The Times* correspondent, on September 25, 1939, "there is noticeable relief that Russia has moved across Germany's path towards the Black Sea." (*The Times*, September 26, 1939.)

And as one would expect, observers in the Balkan countries were following the rapid and sensational developments with strained interest. *The Times* correspondent cabled from Bucharest, September 24, 1939:—

"Throughout the Balkans and the Danubian countries, the admission of the German News Agency that in several places German troops receded before the Soviet troops and that the Russo-German frontier is now established along the Narew, Vistula, and San, has created the deepest impression. It is widely felt that, as far as domination in these parts is concerned, the German threat has been ousted overnight by the Russians." (*The Times*, September 25, 1939.)

Next day, the same correspondent cabled: "As already pointed out, the presence of the Russians astride the Carpathians automatically reduces the German Government's ability to exert influence on this country." (*The Times*, September 26, 1939.)

And how did the course of events strike observers in Northern Europe? *The Times* correspondent cabled from Rotterdam, September 26, 1939:—

"Before the full implications of the Russian intervention were revealed, the Nazis might have hoped to pursue their dynamic career successfully by the absorption of Rumania as a German sphere of influence, followed by the complete domination of the Balkans, where, in order to demonstrate the might of Germany's arm, the map would probably have been redrawn to the advantage of Bulgaria. The Russian occupation of Eastern Poland cuts off that road and puts an end to the German plans for penetration of the Balkans, unless she is prepared to deal with Hungary and Yugoslavia, neither of whom is likely to be as easy game as Rumania would have been with Russia on her flank." (*The Times*, September 27, 1939.)



On the same day that journal's correspondent on the Lithuanian border cabled :—

“ The bargain with Hitler has enormously increased the influence of the U.S.S.R., which is already being felt everywhere between the Baltic and the Black Sea, while the hitherto counter-balancing influence of Germany has been practically eliminated, since that country showed her inability to resist Stalin's claim over the partition line in Poland. It is believed that Germany must now concede whatever the U.S.S.R. demands in East Europe—even the Balkans—unless she is able to achieve a lightning victory in the West and thus free her hands to deal with the new and embarrassing friend which she has admitted on to her threshold.” (September 27, 1939.)

When the Moscow radio reported that the occupation by the Soviet forces of the Belorussian and Ukrainian territory of Poland was greeted joyously by the local population, there were sneers that the Soviet authorities were using the same terms as the Nazis had used when the latter invaded the territory of another State.

### **Soviets bring Economic and Cultural Emancipation**

But all the reports which have since come to hand show the absurdity of comparing the Soviet occupation with that of the Nazi invasions. The Nazis have invariably brought in their wake—and they have done the same in Poland—oppression and persecution of the native peoples, concentration camps, bludgeoning and torture. The Soviet occupation, on the other hand, has not only saved the Belorussian, Ukrainian, Jewish, and Polish masses of the people in these areas from Nazi brutality, but it is already bringing them liberation from the oppression of the landlords and capitalists, whether of Polish or other nationality.

The Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, September 19, 1939, reporting the entry of Soviet troops into Polish Belorussia and the Ukraine declared : “ The atmosphere seems to have resembled that of Russian villages in the revolutionary days of 1917, when the peasants seized the estates and innocently expected the Soviets to allow them to keep the land.”

We would only stress that the expectation of the Soviet peasants—whether “ innocent ” or not—have been decidedly realised in the U.S.S.R. *The land of the landlords and kulaks have certainly been kept by the peasant masses and are being cultivated by them for their own and the whole country's benefit.*

In a message from the same correspondent, published in the *Daily Herald*, September 22, 1939, we read :—

“ Peasant committees are now supervising the division of landlords' estates in some districts of the Polish Ukraine and White Russia.

“Land and implements have already been shared out in certain places.”

The Soviet troops are also bringing the hitherto oppressed peoples culture. As the same *Daily Herald* correspondent also said :—

“Schools using the White Russian language are to be opened soon. Teachers are already being trained.

“Ukrainian workers are reported to be taking over control of factories and electing management committees.”

Soviets composed of workers and peasants and representing all the nationalities—White Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, and Poles—have been set up.

In the course of a report of events from the Eastern front in the *Daily Telegraph* it was stated :—

“A striking example of the new Soviet régime in eastern Poland is furnished by the town of Bartshevo, where the local committee which replaced the town council consists of *two landless peasants, a carpenter, and a labourer.*

“Inventories of the property of the former landlords are being taken, and it has been announced that this property will be divided among the peasantry.” (*Daily Telegraph*, September 23, 1939.) [Our italics.]

Similarly *The Times* correspondent from the Lithuanian border declared :—

“The new Soviet order is now functioning almost completely at Vilna, Baranowicze, and other towns in western White Russia. Police who had remained at the posts were disarmed, some being arrested, and were succeeded by ‘workers’ guards.’” (*The Times*, September 25, 1939.)

The military correspondent of the *Yorkshire Post* stated :—

“The Russians are colonising, not fighting; and they are throwing up such a contrast in the treatment of the Poles, that the race as a whole may very well incline to an old enemy and solidify the latter’s position. The masses of Poles who have crossed into Hungary and Rumania will know what is happening to their kin in the Russian part of occupied Poland; and for themselves they can see that a miracle has happened, and that it is not threatening German bayonets that line the borders of the countries they have flown to, but Slavs, with rifles slung, who help to carry refugee children to the outposts, and offer weary men a cigarette in parting. The outcast Poles will be tempted to return and live in their new Soviet States.” (*Yorkshire Post*, September 23, 1939.)

In earlier pages we have referred to the oppression of the native non-Polish masses by the Polish Government and land-

lords, but it may be interesting to give here the testimony of one whose sympathies are quite evidently with the Polish squires and governing classes generally. "A correspondent," in the course of a long article entitled "The Red Flag Advances," in *The Times*, September 26, 1939, declared :—

"In the former Russian and Austrian territories of Poland the agrarian question was a burning one, and the Poles have failed to solve it by thorough-going agrarian reform. One great obstacle was that Polish dominion beyond the Curzon Line was mainly based on the Polish ownership of the big landed estates."

He proceeded :—

"In these eastern provinces the relations between manor house and village were tense, even before the last war ; and they have become much tenser in the last twenty years. The Russian armies now entering these provinces need little encouragement from Moscow, Kiev, or Minsk to make the White Russian and Ukrainian peasants seize the estates of the Polish big, or merely substantial, land-owners, who must be deemed lucky if they have escaped with their lives. Probably their Polish officials and retainers, the Catholic clergy, and a good many of the Polish colonists planted in these territories in the last twenty years have also fled or are in danger."

Negotiations conducted in Moscow, September 27 and 28, between the Soviet Government representatives and the German Foreign Minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, assisted by the German Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., have resulted in a Soviet-German Treaty of amity and on the frontier between the U.S.S.R. and Germany, and a declaration by the Soviet and German Governments ; and also in an exchange of letters between Molotov and von Ribbentrop on economic questions.

#### **The Germano-Soviet Treaty of Amity and on the Frontier between the U.S.S.R. and Germany**

Following the dissolution of the former Polish State, the Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government regard it as their exclusive task to restore peace and order on that territory and to secure for the peoples residing there a peaceful existence in conformity with their national characteristics.

With this aim in view they arrived at agreement on the following :—

ARTICLE ONE : The Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government establish as the frontier between the interests of their respective States, on the territory of the former Polish State, the line which is drawn on the



appended map, which will be described in more detail in a supplementary protocol.

ARTICLE TWO : Both parties recognise the frontier between the interests of their respective States established in Article One as final and will eliminate any interference by Third Powers with this decision.

ARTICLE THREE : The necessary state reorganisation of the territory west of the line indicated in Article One shall be effected by the German Government, and on the territory east of this line by the Government of the U.S.S.R.

ARTICLE FOUR : The Government of the U.S.S.R. and the German Government regard the reorganisation mentioned above as a reliable foundation for the further development of friendly relations between their peoples.

ARTICLE FIVE : This treaty is subject to ratification. The exchange of ratification instruments shall be effected in Berlin as early as possible. The treaty comes into force as soon as it is signed.

Made in two originals in the German and Russian languages, Moscow, September 28, 1939.

Signed, on the authorisation of the Government of the U.S.S.R., Molotov ;

On behalf of the Government of Germany, Joachim von Ribbentrop.

#### **The Declaration of the Soviet and German Governments of September 28, 1939**

The German Government and the Government of the U.S.S.R., by the treaty signed to-day, having finally settled questions that arose as a result of the dissolution of the Polish State, and having thereby created a firm foundation for a lasting peace in Eastern Europe, in mutual agreement express the opinion that the liquidation of the present war between Germany on the one hand and Great Britain and France on the other is in the interests of all nations.

Therefore both Governments will direct their common efforts, if necessary in accord with other friendly Powers, to attain this aim as early as possible.

If, however, these efforts of both Governments remain futile, it will be established thereby that Great Britain and France bear the responsibility for the continuation of war, and in the event of the continuation of the war the Governments of Germany and the U.S.S.R. will consult each other on the necessary measures.

Signed, on the authorisation of the Government of the U.S.S.R., Molotov.

For the German Government, Ribbentrop.

## **The Exchange of Letters between Molotov and von Ribbentrop**

Moscow, September 28, 1939.

To the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop, at present in Moscow :

Herr Reichminister, referring to our conversations we have the honour to confirm to you that, on the basis and in the spirit of the general political agreement reached by us, the Government of the U.S.S.R. is filled with the desire to do everything to develop economic relations and the trade turnover between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.

With this aim in view, both parties will draw up an economic programme in accordance with which the Soviet Union will supply Germany with raw materials, which Germany will, in her turn, compensate by deliveries of industrial goods to be effected in the course of a lengthy period.

Both countries will draft this economic programme in such a way that the volume of the German-Soviet trade turnover should again reach the highest level attained in the past.

Both Governments will immediately issue the necessary instructions for the realisation of the above measures and will see to it that negotiations should be begun and brought to a conclusion as soon as possible.

Accept, Herr Reichminister, the reiterated assurance of my perfect respect.

(Signed) Molotov.

In reply to this letter Molotov received on September 28, a letter from the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Von Ribbentrop, stating that the German Government agreed to issue all necessary instructions in the spirit of Molotov's letter.

### **Soviet Regain Ethnological Frontier**

Two things emerge clearly from the Soviet-German agreement, firstly, the U.S.S.R. is not anxious to absorb other people's territory—she has contented herself with joining to her own Soviet Belorussian and Ukrainian Republics, the clearly Belorussian and Ukrainian territory which should never have been torn from her. As the Moscow correspondent of *The Times* rightly said :—

“ M. Stalin is withdrawing his forces from the purely Polish territory to a roughly ethnographic frontier. That means that only the Ukrainians and White Russians are being taken into the Soviet Union, and it is argued that the Allies, when victorious, would be unlikely to insist on the reincorporation of these peoples in the new Polish State.

The Soviet withdrawal could, therefore, be a cautious move by Stalin in order to avoid unnecessary complications." (*The Times*, September 30, 1939.)

In the course of its leading article in the same issue, *The Times* stated: "It is to be noted, however, that the latest line of partition restricts the Russian share of ethnic Poland. Russia takes over in the main the White Russians and Ukrainians."

Similarly, the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* declared:—

"By fixing its new western frontier on the line indicated in the statement issued from Moscow, the Soviet Government appears to claim that it has done no more than to reclaim those territories east of the 'Curzon Line' which were captured from Russia by Poland in 1920 and annexed to the re-created Polish State under the Treaty of Riga in 1921." (*Daily Telegraph*, September 30, 1939.)

### Not a Military Alliance

Press correspondents generally are agreed that the Soviet-German Pact cannot be regarded as constituting in any way a military alliance. Thus the political correspondent of the *Sunday Times* declared:—

"There is no evidence of a military alliance between Russia and Germany. And the Nazi faith, which has been rooted in detestation of Communism, has been so compromised that large numbers of his most faithful followers in Germany are left sorely perplexed. There is a blackout in the pages of *Mein Kampf*." (*Sunday Times*, October 1, 1939.)

Similarly *The Times* diplomatic correspondent said:—

"There is no evidence whatever that the Nazis and Bolsheviks have concluded any military convention. Tales of Russian intervention in the Middle East, which find favour in the German Press, seem no more than examples of wishful thinking." (*The Times*, October 2, 1939.)

Mr. J. L. Garvin in the *Observer*, October 1, 1939, also declared:—

"It will be time to talk of a 'peace threat' when a physical threat appears. At present there is no question of real military alliance between Moscow and Berlin. The Kremlin repeats that its political neutrality is unchanged; and that it is prepared to give equal commercial facilities to every belligerent for an equal consideration."



## The Power of the U.S.S.R.

But perhaps the significance of the Russian position has been most clearly stated by Mr. Winston Churchill in the course of his broadcast speech, October 1, 1939, when he declared :—

“What is the second event of this first month ? It is, of course, the assertion of the power of Russia. Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland, instead of invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail.

“When Herr von Ribbentrop was summoned to Moscow last week it was to learn the fact, and to accept the fact that the Nazi designs upon the Baltic States and upon the Ukraine must come to a dead stop.”

## The Key to the Riddle

“I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma ; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or safety of Russia that Nazi Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that it should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of South-Eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.

“But here these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France. None of these three Powers can afford to see Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and, above all, Turkey, put under the German heel.”

## Community of Interests

“Through the fog of confusion and uncertainty we may discern quite plainly the community of interests which exists between England, France, and Russia to prevent the Nazis carrying the flames of war into the Balkans and Turkey.

“Thus (at some risk of being proved wrong by events) I will proclaim to-night my conviction that the second great fact of the first month of the war is that Hitler, and all that Hitler stands for, have been and are being warned off the East and the South-East of Europe.” (*The Times*, October 2, 1939.) [Our cross heads.]

We would emphasise that so far as the national interests of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, and France are concerned, there are no questions on which they clash in any way. This was also recognised by the *Daily Telegraph* when in the course of its report of the 28th day of the war, it declared :—

“ On the one hand, Hitler has made it only too clear what Russia could expect from a triumphant Germany ; and on the other there is no issue on which Russian and Allied interests clash, or even a field on which to fight, except, of course, in the event of Russia despatching troops, or aeroplanes, to aid the Nazis on the Western Front. On this possibility it can only be observed that Stalin in his time has played many rôles, but that of cat’s paw has never been one of them.” (*Daily Telegraph*, September 30, 1939.)

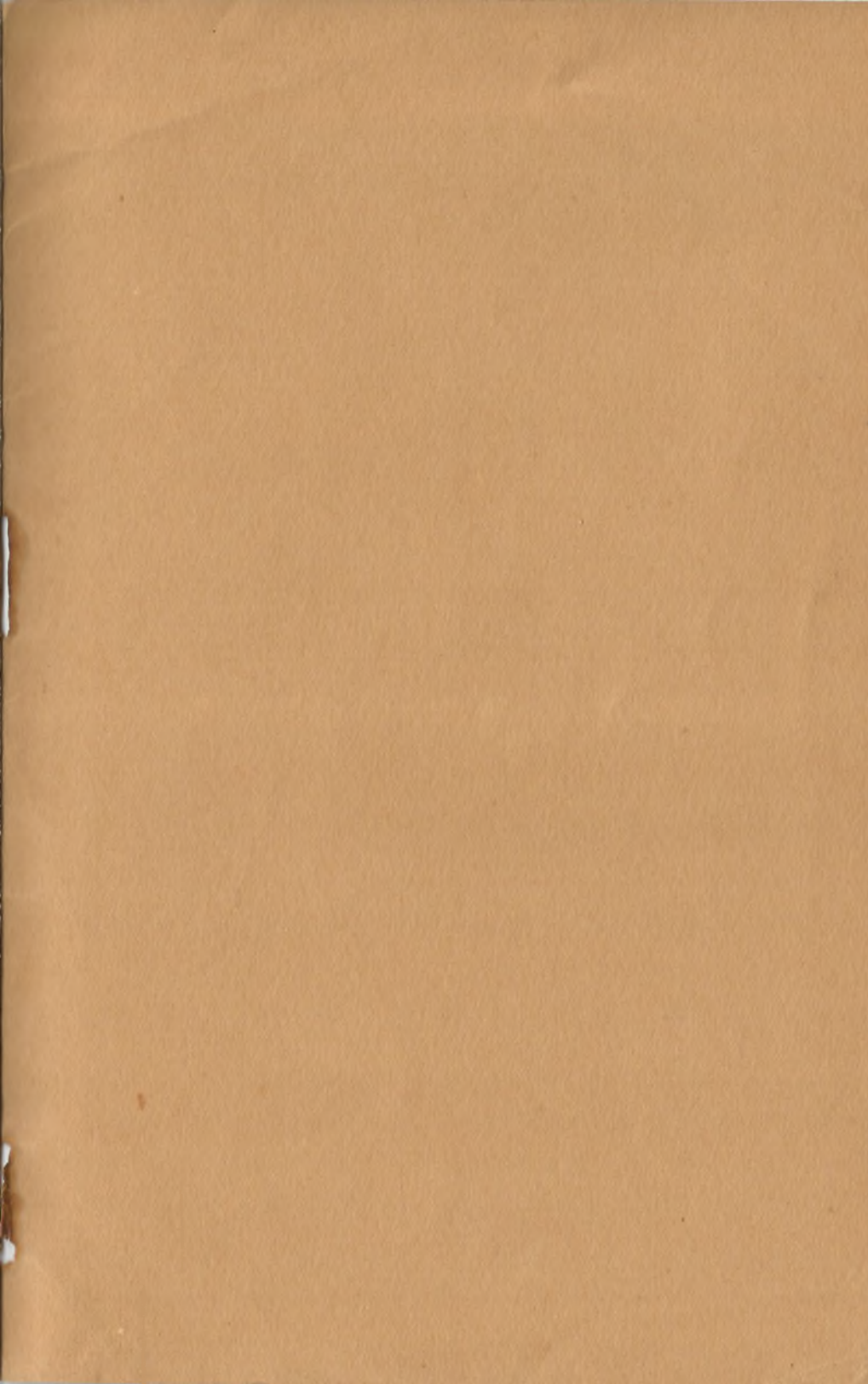
The moral is obvious, the British Government should come down from its high horse, it should waste no more precious time but should accept the offer the Soviet Government has made through its Ambassador, M. Maisky, to Lord Halifax on September 27, 1939, to start trade negotiations immediately—negotiations which ultimately might lead to more friendly political relations.

It is unfortunately true that, as Mr. Lloyd George said in the *Sunday Express*, October 1, 1939, that “ we have been completely outmanœuvred for the fourth or fifth time by the German Dictator.”

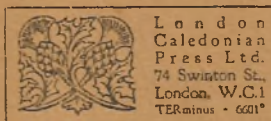
The Germans used every loophole to make contact with the Russians, they sent their most important men and never wasted a minute when the opportunity presented itself.

M. Maisky’s offer presents us now, at the eleventh hour, with an opportunity to reprieve a small part of the tragic blunders committed by the British and French Governments in its dealings with the Soviets.

To-day the U.S.S.R. is the mightiest military and diplomatic force on the continent of Europe or Asia. This is a fact which cannot be ignored and the sooner it is taken seriously into account by the Governments of Great Britain and France the better it will be for European and world peace and well-being.







T.U.all Depts.  
w5928